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**Multimorbidity and Knowledge Architectures: An Interdisciplinary Global Health Collaboration**

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**What you should know about this research study:**

1. We give you this information sheet so that you may read about the purpose, risks, and benefits of this research study.
2. The main goal of research studies is to gain knowledge that may help future patients.
3. You have the right to refuse to take part, or agree to take part now and change your mind later.
4. Whatever you decide, it will not affect your regular care.
5. Please consider this consent form carefully. Ask any questions before you make a decision. Your participation is voluntary.

**Introduction**

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study about people living with multiple illnesses, sometimes called ‘multimorbidity’. We have asked you to take part in this study either because you are someone who lives with multiple illnesses, or because you are close to somebody who does. The study will be carried out by researchers from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), UK, and the Organisation for Public Health Interventions and Development (OPHID), Zimbabwe. The study is funded by a Research Fellowship in Humanities and Social Science awarded by the Wellcome Trust, UK.

**Purpose of this study**

Multimorbidity is increasing globally, including in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) such as Zimbabwe. Multimorbidity is challenging to address, because health research and care have mainly been based on the treatment of single diseases. This study will use qualitative social science methods to find out how people in Zimbabwe experience, understand and care for multimorbidity. Using our findings, we will work closely with researchers, carers and policymakers to improve the care for people living with multimorbidities in Zimbabwe and in other LMICs. We will invite around 200 people to take part in total. This includes patients and families, healthcare workers, researchers and policymakers.

**Procedures and Duration**

If you agree to take part, we will ask you to keep a diary over the course of approximately 2 weeks about your experiences of living with (or being close to someone living with) multiple illnesses. This diary will either be written, or, if you are willing, using audio-visual equipment. You are free to record whatever parts of your day-to-day life that you feel is important for understanding your experiences. This might include activities around the home, but also health-related activities beyond the home (e.g. going to the pharmacy, the clinic, or to a healer). The study team will provide further technical guidance on this process, as well as training in how to use the equipment. After reading/viewing your diary, we will then invite you to take part in an in-depth interview about your understandings and experiences of multimorbidity. The interview will include questions about your household, illness history, understandings of illness, daily routines and about healthcare seeking. The interview will last between 60 and 90 minutes, and we will ask your permission to digitally record and transcribe our discussion. We may ask you for a follow-up interview at a later date if you are comfortable with this. Using the information you provide in the diary and interview, we will put together a short case study (either written or audio-visual) that describes the patient’s illness experiences. We will consult with you to make sure that you are happy with what we have included.

We may also invite you to participate in a collaborative workshop that will include people from a range of backgrounds to discuss multimorbidity in Zimbabwe. During these workshops, we will consider case studies from patients and families living with multimorbidities and/or other findings from this study. You will be invited to share your experiences and to consider ways in which healthcare could be improved to better respond to patient needs. Workshops will be audio recorded and transcribed to accurately capture proceedings and ensure that the full range of people’s views are captured.

**Are there any possible risks if I take part?**

There are no direct risks associated with taking part in this study. However, due to the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic, personal protective equipment and hand sanitizer will be made available during study activities, and social distancing rules will be observed. The study might raise topics that are sensitive, for instance experiences of illness that might have resulted in adverse outcomes. We will be careful to phrase our questions sensitively and will be responsive to any signs of discomfort. You are free to refuse to answer any questions.

**Benefits**

There are no direct benefits to you if you choose to take part. However, where travel is needed for the purposes of study activities, you will be reimbursed money ($10) for transport. Refreshments and a meal will be provided at workshops, and refreshments will be offered during interviews.

**Confidentiality**

All information will be stored on a password-protected file and will be shared with the research team only. We will use the information that you share in research outputs, which include scientific publications and reports. This information will be used in an anonymised form, which means we will not use your name or identifying features. During the workshops mentioned above, preliminary findings will be shared with participants, which will include patient case studies. When putting together the case study about your experiences, we will consult with you to ensure that your face and identifying features are not included and that the other aspects of the video cannot be traced back to you personally. Participants in the workshops will further be informed that the workshops are confidential, and that they should not share any of the information or discussions take place with anyone else. Under some circumstances, the Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe and Research Council of Zimbabwe may need to review participants’ records for compliance audits.

**Data Archiving**

At the end of the project, data that can be anonymised fully to protect participants’ identities will be archived through the UK Data Service (UKDS), a reputable and widely recognised data repository. Details of how to access the data will be published with each study publication, and access will be granted to bona fide research users and beneficiaries based on a case-by-case request and approval process.

**Ethical Review**

All research involving human participants is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Research Ethics Committee (Ref 26469). The Joint Research Ethics Committee for the University of Zimbabwe College of Health Sciences and The Parirenyatwa Group of Hospitals (Ref X) and the Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe (Ref X) have also reviewed the study and have approved the study to be conducted.

**Who is organising and funding this study?**

This study is funded by the Wellcome Trust, United Kingdom. London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine is the sponsor for the research, and they have full responsibility for the project including the collection, storage and analysis of your information.

**Voluntary participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to participate in this study, your decision will not affect your future treatment at any health facility. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

**Offer to answer questions**

Before you sign this form, please ask any questions on any aspect of this study that is unclear to you. You may take as much time as necessary to think it over.

**AUTHORIZATION**

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE, HAVE HAD ALL YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED, AND HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE.

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Name of Research Participant Signature (or Thumb Print\*) Date

(please print) of participant

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Name of Staff Obtaining Consent Signature of staff Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Witness\* Signature of witness\* Date

(\*Only required if participant is unable to read or write)

**Identity Protection, Audio and Video Recording**

**Statement of consent to be audiotaped and videotaped**

*(Please choose YES or NO by ticking the relevant box)*

* I agree to **being audio recorded Yes No**
* I agree to having my **video recorded Yes No**

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Name of Participant (please print) Signature (or Thumb Print\*) Date

of participant

(\*Only required if participant is unable to read or write)

**YOU WILL BE OFFERED A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM TO KEEP.**

If you have any questions concerning this study or consent form beyond those answered by the investigator, including questions about the research, your rights as a research participant or research-related injuries; or if you feel that you have been treated unfairly and would like to talk to someone other than a member of the research team, please feel free to contact the Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe (MRCZ) by telephone on 0242791193 or 08644073772. The MRCZ Offices are located at the following address: 20 Cambridge Road, Avondale, Harare.